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THE CONFESSION OF 1967

1 On Tuesday morning, May 24, 1966, the 178th General Assembly
of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., meeting in Boston, Massa-
cusetts, overwhelmingly voted to approve a very much revised version of
2 the proposed "Confession of 1967". There were only four negative votes
recorded. The new Confession will now be submitted to the Presbyteries
for acceptance or rejection.

3 By this action the Assembly approved a new creed for the largest
Presbyterian Church in the world--193 presbyteries, 9,100 churches,
12,618 ministers, and more than 3,302,000 Baptized, communicant members
over 12 years of age. ~~It has an annual budget of more than \$304,000,000 .~~
~~addition~~

4 The nearly unanimous vote of the Assembly in favor of the Revised
Confession makes it almost certain that the Presbyteries will approve the
5 new creed. It is very important, therefore, that we become thoroughly
familiar with the new theological statement of the world's strongest
6 Presbyterian Church, particularly since this church has had the longest
historical association with the Presbyterian Church of Korea, ever since
its first missionary in Korea, Dr. Horace Allen, opened up Protestant
missionary work in this country in September 1884.

7 Much confusion in our study of the proposed Confession of 1967
will be avoided if we are careful to remember that there are two versions
8 of the Confession. They must not be confused. The first version, which
we may call the Original Version, was tentatively approved for study only,
by the General Assembly of 1965, at which I was a delegate. At several
9 important points it was rather liberal theologically, and it is this
original version which has been widely quoted and criticized in Korea.
10 But after thorough study by a Special Committee of Fifteen, appointed by
the General Assembly, it was rejected by the Assembly of 1966 in favor of
a radically revised version.

11 The second version, then, which we may call the Revised Version,
is the radical revision of the original, changed and corrected by the
Committee of Fifteen after study of more than 1,200 written criticisms
12 of the original. The Revised Version is more conservative, and it is this
version which was finally approved by the General Assembly of 1966. It
will almost certainly become the new creed of the United Presbyterian
Church.

13 Let us briefly study it under the following headings:

1. The background of the new Confession.
2. The Original Version of 1965

2. The Book of Confessions

4. 3. Criticisms of the 1965 version.
5. 4. The Revised Version of 1966.
6. 5. Appraisal of the Confession of 1967.

I. The Background of ~~the~~ the New Confession.

14 When the old Northern Presbyterian Church, and the old United
Presbyterian Church united in 1958, both stood on the doctrinal foundation
of the three-hundred-year-old Westminster Confession of Faith. But both
had added modifying and clarifying statements to the older creed, the
15 Northern Presbyterians in 1903, and the United Presbyterians in 1925.
The Northern Presbyterians, for example, had added statements on the
16 love of God, on missions, and on the Holy Spirit, for these subjects had
been inadequately treated in the old creed. The United Presbyterians had
17 adopted an entirely new creed, a shorter summary of the Westminster
Confession, ~~by~~ just as the Presbyterian Church in Korea, when it adopted
a Confession of Faith in 1907 did not adopt the old Westminster Confession,
but a shorter, ~~modified~~ modified adaptation.

18 The original purpose of the General Assembly of 1958 in
appointing a Committee on a Brief Contemporary Statement of Faith was
to study the additions and modifications which both churches had made
19 in the Westminster Confession, in order that they might produce one new
statement which would satisfy both the uniting churches. But as this
committee of Presbyterian theologians studied its task, it came to feel
that the church today needed more than a brief, contemporary statement
20 explaining the Westminster Confession, it needed a whole new statement
of faith, specifically directed to the thinking of the world of ~~the~~ the 20th
21 century. For the Reformed position is that creeds are always subordinate
to Scripture, and are always subject to reform and revision.

22 It further felt that any new statement of faith should be based
not on one 17th century confession alone (the Westminster Confession of
1648) but should also be drawn from other historic Protestant Confessions
23 as well. Its final decision, therefore, as approved by the General
Assembly of 1964, was to try a two-fold approach. On the one hand, it
24 would be true to the church's past and prepare for the church's guidance
"a book of creeds and confessions taken from the early, reformation, and
25 modern church". And on the other hand, it would meet the theological
26 needs of the present by preparing a contemporary statement of faith, "not
a syllabus of all the topics of theology, but a confession of the meaning
of Christ's reconciling work concretely in the life of the church."

II. The Book of Confessions.

27 The first part of the new creedal position of the United
Presbyterian Church is the Book of Confessions, a collection of seven
28 great historical creedal statements. In the words of the new Confession,
the Church "accepts and is guided by the Nicene and Apostles' Creeds from
the early church; the Scots Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the
Second Helvetic Confession from the Reformation; the Westminster Confession
and Shorter Catechism from the seventeenth century, and the Theological
Declaration of Barmen from the twentieth century."

29 This has been criticized as creating a "museum" of confessions
30 which can be treated with indifference rather than demanding commitment.
31 But the connection is actually stronger than that. It rather gives the
theological foundation upon which the shorter, more contemporary "Confession
of 1967" is declared to stand. In this sense it is exactly what the Korean
Church did with the Westminster Confession in 1907 when it declared, in
adopting a shorter Confession of Faith that "it does not thereby reject
the Doctrinal Standards of the parent Churches...but, on the contrary, com-
mends them, especially the Westminster Confession of Faith, and the Larger
and Shorter Catechisms..." (Digest of the Presbyterian Church of Korea, p. 55)

33 A word should be said about the seven creeds of the Book of
Confessions:

33 1) The Nicene Creed is the earliest universally accepted theological
creed of the Christian Church, dating back to the fourth century. Its great
emphasis is "Jesus Christ is God".

34 2) The Apostles' Creed is, in part, even older than the Nicene Creed and
is the most familiar Confession of Faith ever formulated. Its great emphasis
is on the historical facts of the gospel.

35 3) The Scots Confession of 1560 is the first creed of the Church of
Scotland which is the mother church of the American Presbyterian churches.
It was composed by John Knox, a disciple of John Calvin. *Strives Reformation*

36 4) The Second Helvetic Confession (1561) has been called "theologically
the best of the Reformed Confessions (Schaff). Added to its strong Calvin-
istic theology are valuable statements on practical theology and church
and family life.

37 5) The Heidelberg Catechism of 1563 is the creed most widely used by
the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches of Europe. *Personal*

38 6) The Westminster Confession and Shorter Catechism (1648) are the
creedal statements most widely used by English-speaking Presbyterians. The
Korean Presbyterian Church's Confession of Faith is based upon it as it had
been modified and shortened by the Presbyterian Church of India.

39 7) The Theological Declaration of Barmen (1943) is a statement of
resistance by Reformed and Lutheran churchmen in Germany ^{under} to Nazi persecution.
When Hitler, like the Japanese in Korea, tried to force a state religion on
the German churches and organize them into one German Super-Church, the
bravest pastors of Europe defied him at risk of martyrdom with this great
statement that Christ alone is the Word of God and Head of the Church and
Lord of all life.

40 x These seven ~~historical~~ creeds form the historical and theological
foundation of the Confession of 1967, [the new creed in modern language,
which we must now examine as it first appeared in 1965 in its un-revised,
original form.]

III. The Original 1965 Version of the Proposed Confession.

41 The Committee presented its original version of the Proposed
Confession to the General Assembly of 1965. It was called "The Confession
of 1967" because the laws of the church require three steps, taken over a
period of at least three years, to change the church's constitution.

The "Confession", if approved by the Assembly of 1965, would have to be approved again by the Assembly of 1966, and would still require final approval by the Presbyteries, which could not take place before 1967.

42 The central theological theme of the new Confession is
43 reconciliation. Just as in the early church God's gift of salvation
44 to men, which is the main theme of the Bible, was creedally expressed
in terms of the deity of the Redeemer, while later creeds expressed it
in terms of the work of the Redeemer, and the creeds of the Reformation
expressed it in terms of the means of redemption, a modern creed, it was
felt, should explain God's gift of salvation to men by using a term
which is both Biblical and contemporaneously significant. This term is
45 "reconciliation" which is Biblical (see II Cor. 5: 18020) and at the same
time exceedingly meaningful in a sadly torn and divided world.

46 The text of the new Confession is divided in four parts: (1)
Preface, (2) Part One: God's Work of Reconciliation, (3) Part Two: The
Ministry of Reconciliation, and (4) Part Three: The Fulfillment of
Reconciliation.

47 1. Preface. Three of the most important statements in the
Preface are: that the church must in every age confess its faith anew,
but that all such confessions and creeds are subordinate standards,
48 "subject to the authority of Jesus Christ, the Word of God, as the Scrip-
tures bear witness to him." (2) That the historical doctrines of "the
49 Trinity and the Person of Christ...form the basis and determine the structure
of the Christian faith. And (3) That "in Jesus Christ God was reconciling
the world to himself. Jesus Christ is God with man.." *This is the clearest statement,
in the original version, of Christ's deity.*

50 2. ~~and the Ministry of Reconciliation~~ Part One: God's Work of
Reconciliation. This part of the Confession, in its original version
51 contained two of the most controversial sections of the whole statement.
One was on the person of Jesus Christ. The other was on the Bible.

52 But these two controversial sections were only part of a larger
whole which followed a very orthodox trinitarian pattern. Section I, "The
Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ", dealt with man as sinner and Jesus as
Saviour. Section II was called "The Love of God. Section III, "The
Communion of the Holy Spirit" dealt not only with the Christian's new
life in the Spirit, but also with the Bible as one way by which the Spirit
communicates God's revelation to man.

53 The much-criticized section on Jesus Ch/rist begins, "In Jesus
of Nazareth true humanity was realized one for all. Jesus, a Palestinian
54 Jew, lived among his own people and shared their needs, temptations, joys
and sorrows..." But it should be pointed out that after this emphasis on
Christ's true humanity, the Confession continued through to his rising from
the dead, and calls him "Messiah and Lord", saviour of all men", and
"judge of all men", even in the original version.

55 Christ's saving work is described Scripturally as "God's
reconciling act in Jesus Christ," "a sacrifice", "an atonement", "a
56 vicarious satisfaction" etc., but the Confession declares that "these are
images of a truth which remains beyond the reach of all theory in the
depths of God's love for man."

57 3. Part Two: The Ministry of Reconciliation. In contrast to
58 Part One, which was doctrinal and theological, Part Two is ethical and
59 practical, dealing with the Church's mission of reconciliation, and its
equipment for that mission. In a beautiful and powerful passage the Confession
declares that the pattern of the church's mission is Jesus Christ, its Lord.
"His life as a man involves the church in the common life of man. His service to men commits the church to work for ~~the~~ every form of human welfare. His suffering makes the church sensitive to all the sufferings of mankind..."

60 Acting on this conviction the Confession makes some unprecedentedly
specific pronouncements on social problems for an official creed. It deals
with three great social issues: racial division, war, and poverty. Individuals or congregations who shirk Christian action in these areas "resist the Spirit of God, and repudiate the faith." the Confession boldly and controversially states.

61 4. Part Three: The Fulfillment of Reconciliation. This concluding brief section is on eschatology. It is stated in terms of the Kingdom of God as "the triumph of God (both present and future) over all that resists his will and disrupts his creation."

62 All that I have been quoting and summarizing above is from the original version of the Proposed Confession. This is the only version now available in Korea, as translated in Korean-English parallel pages by So Nam Dong (1967 Sinang Kopaek An). But remember that this is not the final version. It was accepted by the 1965 Assembly for study only. Even that step however was not accomplished without criticism.

I remember sitting as a delegate at that Assembly in Columbus, Ohio. I was so shocked by the proposed Confession's comparative silence on the deity of Christ, and by the weakness of its doctrine of Scripture, that I agreed to be scheduled as one of the speakers from the platform against the Confession. As it turned out there was not time for all the opponents of the Confession to speak, but I mention this to indicate my initial very negative reaction to some glaring weaknesses in the proposed creed.

But at the same time I felt that there was much about the Confession, even in its original version, which should be commended rather than criticized. Let me mention some of them before proceeding with the criticisms:

1) It is to be commended, first, for stirring the church to express its faith again in this generation. No creed--not even the great Westminster Confession--can ever exhaust the truths of Scripture. In every generation there must be fresh theological research into the meaning of God's Word, and new formulations and explanations of its truth. I am not afraid of a new creed. I am only afraid of false creeds.

2) It is to be commended, second, for trying to express the old, old faith of the church in modern language. The purpose of a creed is to make the meaning of the Bible more clearly understood. If archaic language obscures that meaning, it should be changed. The English language has changed a great deal in the 200 years since the Westminster Confession was written.

3) It is to be commended, thirdly, for its re-emphasis of the great Biblical doctrine of Reconciliation. There is nothing weak or heretical about this central theme of the Confession. It is precisely what Jesus Christ came to accomplish, as Paul so clearly teaches.

4) It is to be commended, fourthly, for its reminder that Christ is true man, as well as true God. The old unitarianism denied his deity, but there is a new unitarianism in some places that is so over-spiritualized that it virtually denies Christ's humanity.

5) It is to be commended, finally, for its firm declaration that the Christian faith must speak to social problems and concerns as well as private spiritual problems, for this is what the Bible teaches. A gospel that speaks only about heaven and salvation, and not about this world and our responsibilities as Christians in the world, is only half a gospel.

But despite all its good points and excellent intentions, there were important points at which the proposed Confession had to be criticized.

IV. Criticisms of the Original Version.

The Committee of Fifteen, specially appointed by the General Assembly to receive criticisms and suggest revisions ~~submissions~~ to the next General Assembly reported that it was flooded with more than 1,100 written criticisms of the Confession. Two of these letters of criticism were from the United Presbyterian Korea Mission, which studied the Confession and appointed a committee to protest against some of the inadequacies in the new creed and ask for some revisions. I was chairman of that Committee.

In our first letter, Dec. 12, 1965, we wrote that though there was much in the proposed Confession which we deeply appreciated, "at two critical points it is the consensus of opinion in our Mission that...as it now stands it is unacceptable and in urgent need of revision."

The two points which we most vehemently contested were on the Deity of Christ, and on the Bible. On ~~the first~~ the first point, the Deity of ~~Jesus~~ Christ, we insisted that the Confession misleadingly overemphasizes the humanity of Christ as "a Palestinian Jew." To balance the picture properly, we declared, the creed must also contain much more emphatic and clear statements of his deity. It should clearly state that "God became man" in Jesus Christ, and should name Jesus Christ as "God the Son", we said.

On the second point, the Bible, we insisted that the Confession must call the Bible the Word of God. In this we disagreed with the Barthian flavor of the original Confession which declares that only Christ is the Word of God. Its section on the Bible begins, "The one sufficient revelation of ~~God~~ God is Jesus Christ, the Word of God incarnate, to whom the Holy Spirit bears witness in many ways. The church has received the Old and New Testaments as the normative witness to this revelation and has recognized them as Holy Scriptures..." This sounded too weak to us. We urgently requested, therefore, that the statement be revised and strengthened to recognize the Bible as "the written Word of God, the unique and authoritative witness" to Christ. And we asked that a reference to the inspiration of the Bible be added by recognizing that the writers of the Bible were "God-guided men." We also criticized the tone of the references to historical and literary criticism as necessary for understanding the Bible, for we felt

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that the Holy Spirit speaks to simple people, not just to scholars, and illumines their minds and hearts for the understanding of the Bible.

In another long letter the Mission added other less urgent criticisms. These were echoed by thousand of pastors and laymen in the church. The whole wide range of objections to the Confession of '67, in its original version, can be narrowed down to five major points of concern, the first two of which I have already mentioned.

1. The Deity of Christ. The Confession is criticized for over-stressing the humanity and neglecting the Deity of Christ. As a member of our Mission's Committee wrote, "If we cannot hold aloft a Saviour who is truly God as well as truly man, then we have no distinctive message for a world that is lost." (E. O. DeCamp, to W.S. Skinner, Oct. 31, 1965)

2. The Doctrine of Scripture. Objecting to the weakness of the Confession's doctrine of the Bible, and to the Barthian way it separates the Word of God, Christ, from the written record, the Bible, one minister wrote, "The new document (i.e. the Confession) can be an instrument of strength to our church only to the degree that it bears witness to the authority of the Word--both Written and Incarnate--for the two are inseparable..." (C. Seetehner, to E. Dowe, Mar. 23, 1965).

3. Universalism. Many feared that the proposed Confession contained an implied doctrine of universalism, that is, that the world is not lost, that all men will ultimately be saved and none will suffer eternal death. The original version reads, for example, "Jesus Christ is the Saviour of all men", and "To receive life from the risen Lord is to have life eternal; to refuse life from him is to be separated from God in death." The second phrase significantly omits the word "eternal", as if to imply that even the lost will finally be saved.

4. Man's Response to God. In places the new Confession seemed to ignore the necessity of ~~man's~~ conversion and repentance and faith as ~~man's~~ required of man in responding to God's love before he can be reconciled. This evangelistic ~~need~~ doctrine seemed to be replaced by concerns over social issues.

5. Reconciliation in Society. The proposed Confession was criticized, finally, for its over-dogmatism on social issues, compared with its comparative diffidence on theological issues. It was particularly criticized for singling out the three social problems of race, war and poverty as demanding urgent Christian action without any mention of the equally urgent need for a revival of personal morality.

So ^{strong} ~~urgently~~ was the ^{demand} ~~need~~ for radical correction and revision of the Confession ~~felt in the church~~ that an independent organization was formed to work for that end. It was called "Presbyterians United for a Biblical Confession." One of its ablest spokesmen was Dr. John A. Mackay, former president of Princeton Theological Seminary. But the General Assembly also set up an official procedure to ~~termine~~ ^{define} and implement the will of the Church in correcting and revising the Confession. This was the Committee of 15, which presented its revised Confession early in 1966.

V. The Revised Version (1966)

The Revised Version of the Confession of 1967 which the Committee of Fifteen produced ~~after studying all the criticisms~~, is importantly different from the original version. Its adoption by the Assembly of 1966 in place of the earlier, much-criticized version was part of what Time Magazine called "the conservative revolution" in that Assembly.

At every major point in which the original had been criticized, significant and sometimes radical revisions were made. The original Confession was like a sick patient, with great potential for a good life but dangerously weak in a number of critical organs. The Committee of Fifteen operated on it like a team of surgeons, and when the operation was over, the patient was like a new man.

Let us note the major amendments made in the five areas of major critical concern.

1. The first critical area was the doctrine of the Deity of Christ. At this point the original version was rather silent because, it said, it "recognized" earlier creedal statements on the Person of Christ, as in the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds, etc. But "recognition" was not strong enough for the Committee of Fifteen. It amended the section (bottom line, p. 3 of Korean text) so that the revised Confession not only "recognizes" but "reaffirms" the great, historical Christological doctrines of the earlier creeds of the Church. More than that, it adds some strong sentences on the Deity of Christ to the text of the Confession itself. These include important phrases such as the following: ~~2nd~~ (p. 4, second paragraph, lines 2, 3, and 5) "He (i.e. Christ) is the Eternal Son of the Father, who became man and lived among us to fulfill this work of Reconciliation..." ~~2nd~~ And it adds this strong trinitarian statement, "This work of God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is the foundation of all confession-al statements..." In another place (p. 9, section 2, first paragraph, line 1) a reference to Jesus as a man of Nazareth is strengthened by the addition of the phrase that he is also "the Messiah".

When I saw the revised version and compared it with the original which our Mission had strongly criticized, I had to admit that the revision had done even more than we had asked and had unmistakably affirmed our Church's strong conviction that Jesus Christ is indeed our Lord and God.

2. The second critical area was the doctrine of Scripture. Here, too, highly important amendments were made. The Barthian denial that the Bible is the Word of God was condemned by the addition of the specific phrase, "the Holy Scriptures...are received and obeyed as the Word of God written." Even more significant, the supreme authority of Scripture, which the original version was very ambiguous, was clearly set forth in the revised version. The old version merely said that Scripture is "the normative witness" to Christ. But the revised version rewrote the whole section to read

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declare that Scripture is the "unique and authoritative witness.. The Scriptures are not a witness among others, but the witness without parallel." And in another added sentence the revised version goes on to state that the Old and New Testament are "prophetic and apostolic testimony in which (the church) hears the word of God and by which its faith and obedience are nourished and regulated" (p. 9, section 2, paragraph 1, lines 2,3 and 4; lines 4,5,6). It also repaired the omission of any reference to inspiration in the earlier version by adding the very important statement that the Scriptures are "given under the guidance of the Holy Spirit" (paragraph 3, line 2).

By these amendments the Confession of '67, though not quite as precise and lofty in its statements on Scripture as the Westminster Confession, nevertheless brings itself into line with the essence of that great earlier declaration by the Puritan and Scottish divines. Where the Westminster Confession says that Scripture is "the only infallible rule...the rule of faith and practice," the Confession of '67 in its revised form puts the same essential truth of the supreme authority of Scripture in these words, that Scripture is "the unique and authoritative witness.., the witness without parallel... the word of God..by which the church's faith and obedience are..regulated."

3. To guard against the heresy of universalism, two ambiguous phrases in the original version were reworded. The sentence, "Christ is the saviour of all men", which might imply that all men will be saved, was changed to "Christ is the saviour for all men," which is Biblical (p. 6, l. 1). And the phrase "to refuse life from him is to be separated from God in death", which might imply that the only punishment of sin is natural death, was changed to "to refuse life from him is death, which is separation from God." This rightly suggests that the real horror of hell is not so much death as separation from God.

In similar fashion, the other areas of major concern were revised and corrected. A whole new paragraph on personal morality was added, to correct the impression that ~~the only~~ Christianity's only ethical concern is social. But time and space does not permit further elaboration of the amendments.

VI. APPRAISAL OF THE CONFESSION.

The result of all these amendments is a Confession of Faith of which the great number of evangelical conservatives in the United Presbyterian Church is no longer afraid. The Committee of Fifteen had done its work so well that the very men who had organized "Presbyterians United for a Biblical Confession" to oppose the Confession of 1967, publicly have announced that all the major corrections ~~for~~ which they demanded must be made in the original version, have now been made. In their June Newsletter they say, we can "in good conscience urge the approval of the amended Confession of '67 by the Presbyteries, and use it in our congregations as one means for the renewal and extension of the ministry of the Church."

It is still not a perfect creed, this Proposed Confession. If I were writing it, for example, I would add a number of theological revisions at places where I think it could be strengthened. But I can accept what the Confession says, and can take satisfaction in the fact that the things it does not say are still in the older creeds upon which it stands, and which it reaffirms. It is a Biblical Confession, a Trinitarian Confession, and it points to Jesus Christ alone as the way of salvation.

-- Samuel Hugh Moffett

1967 년 신 앙 고 백

1966년 ~~제~~ 178 회 총회에서 미국연합 장로교회는 많은 수정을 본 1967년 신앙고백 초안을 채택하기로 표결하였는데 반대표는 4표 뿐이었다. 이것은 수정된 신앙고백이 세계에서 가장 큰 장로교회의 새로운 신조가 될 것이라는 것을 의미한다.

이 신앙고백은 한국^{에서} 널리 토론 되었는데 다음에 중요한 점을 염두에 둔다면 많은 혼란을 피하게 될것이다.

1. 이것은 ^{본명}미국인의 신조이다. ^{결교} 한국교회를 위하여 만들어진 것이 아니며 한국교회에게 이것을 받아드리도록 요청하지도 않을 것이다. 이 신조의 목적은 미국^{이러한 특수한 사회적} 형편에서 복음이 좀더 쉽게 이해되도록 하자는 데에 있는 것이다.
2. 이것이 미국연합장로교회의 신조의 전부가 아니다. 즉 이것은 사도신경이나 웨스트민스터 신앙고백을 대치시키는것도 아니다. 사도신경이나 웨스트민스터 신앙고백은 교회의 신조로서 여전히 남아 있으며 이 새로운 신앙고백은 단지 그것들에 추가 하는 것이다.
3. 1967년 신앙고백에는 서로다른 2가지 초안이 있다. 이것들은 혼돈되어서는 않된다. 첫번째 초안은 1965년에 나온것이며 약간 자유신학적인 경향이 있었다. 한국에서 이 신앙고백에 대한 ^{심각한} ~~많은~~ 비평은 첫번째 초안에 근거를 두고 있다. 이 첫번째 초안은 66년연합장로교총회서부결 되었으며 그 대신에 신학적으로 보다더 보수적인 방향으로 많은 수정을 본 두번째 초안이 통과 되었다.
- ✓ 4. 이것은 아직도 연합장로교회에 의하여 채택 된것은 아니다. 연합장로교회 189개 노회의 3분의 2가 이 신앙고백을 받아드려야만 채택 되는 것이다. 그러므로 한국 교회에서 이것을 공식적으로 토론하는것은 너무나 이른감이 있으며 아직도 표준번역이 나오지 않았다.

그러나 한국 ~~역사~~^{교회 역사} 자매 교회의 새로운 신앙고백을 연구하고 이해하는 것은 중요한 것이다. 이러한 연구를 돕기 위하여 ~~우리는~~^{저는} 1967년 신앙고백에 관한 몇 가지 중요한 사실을 지적할 수 있다.

1. 신앙고백집 (The Book of Confession)

1967년도 신앙고백만이 연합장로교회의 새로운 신조가 아니라 오히려 그 신조는 여러 신앙고백을 포함한 "신앙고백집" 이란 그것이다. 이 ~~집~~^{신앙고백집을 전무한다면}은 186 페이지나 되는데 그중에 1967년 신앙고백은 단지 마지막 15 페이지 뿐이며 교회의 지침이 되는 8개의 신앙고백중에 8번째의 고백이다. 이 고백집은

- 1). 예수는 "참 되신 하나님 이시다" 라고한 니케아신조 로서 시작되며
- 2). "복음은 역사적 사실" 이라고 강조한 사도신경을 포함하며
- 3). 칼빈의 제자인 존 닉스에 의하여 제정된 "스코틀랜드 신앙고백"
- 4). 실천신학을 강조한 "제2의 스위스 신앙고백"
5. 개인의 영적생활에 중점을 둔 "하이델 베르크 요리문답"
6. 유명한 "웨스트 민스터 신앙고백과 요리문답"
- 7). 그리스도만이 하나님의 말씀이며 교회의 머리이고 모든 생명의 주님이시라고 주장 하므로써 나치 박해에 도전을 한 "바르멘선언"
- 8). 마지막으로 확목(고후 5: 18 - 20)의 대한 성서적 교리를 근거로 하며 오늘날의 분열된 세계에서 확목의 깊은 의미를 지적하는 1967년신앙고백이 들어 있다.

2. 수정되기전 원래의 신앙고백에 대한 비평

1967년 신앙고백 초안이 1965년 총회에 제출 되었을 때 그것이 다만 연구대상으로 받아들여 졌지만 많은 비평이 있어서 15인의 특별위원회를 조직하여 비평을 듣고 그것을 수정케 하였다. 이 위원회는 1100통 이상의 비평 서간을 받았다.

다음과 같은 3가지 중요한 비평이 있었다. 첫째로 새로운 신앙고백은 기독교론에 있어 유니테리안(Uniterianism)으로 향하고 있다고 했다. 왜냐하면 그것은 그리스도의 인성을 너무 강조하고 그의 신성에 관해서는 침묵을 지키고 있다. 둘째는 새로운 신앙고백은 성서론에 있어 배발트주의적이라고 했다. 왜냐하면 그리스도만이 하나님의 말씀이며 성서의 말씀은 하나님 말씀임을 증거하는 사람의 말이라고 주장하기 때문이다. 셋째는 새로운 신앙고백은 구원론에 있어서 일반적인 구원론(Universalist)이다 라고 했다. 왜냐하면 모든사람이 궁극적으로 구원받을 수 있다는 것처럼 그리스도는 모든사람의 구세주라고 주장했기 때문이다. 이 신앙고백에 반대하는 비평이 하도 강해서 많은 보수적 장로교 교인들은 새로운 신앙고백을 부결시키기 위한 단체를 조직하였다. 이것은 "성서적 신앙고백을 위하여 연합한 장로교 교인들"이라고 불리웠다. 이 단체는 위에 말한 세가지 이단설과 다른 많은 점에도 반대해서 재수정을 요구하였던 것이다.

3. 수정된 1967년의 신앙고백

15인 위원회가 모든 비평을 연구한후 만든 수정된 신앙고백 초안은 수정되지 않은 초안과는 아주 현저하게 차이가 있다. 1966년 총회가 보다 자유적인 첫번째 초안을 부결하고 보다 보수적으로 수정된 초안을 통과했을 때 타임지는 장로교내의 "보수적 혁명"이라 불렀다.

첫번째 중요한 수정은 그리스도의 신성과 인성간의 균형을 회복하는 것이 었다. 그의 신성에 관한 강력한 진술, 즉 그는(그리스도) 아버지의 영원한 아들이며 사람이 되었다, 와 같은것이 추가 되었다. 그리고 또 한가지는 수정되기전 첫번째초안에서 니케아 신앙고백과 웨스트민스터 신앙고백이 그리스도의 신성에 대한 진술을 "인정"만 하는 반면에 수정된 초안은 이 진술을 "승인하고 재 확인한다"라는 것으로 고쳤다.

두번째의 심각한 분야는 성서론 이었다. 여기에서도 중요한 점을 수정했다. 성경이 하나님의 말씀이라는 것을 바르트주의적 (Barthian) 으로 부안하는점은 "성서는 기록된 하나님의 말씀이다" 라는 문구를 추가 하므로써 극복 되었다. 그리고 성서의 최대의 권위는 다음 문구를 추가 하므로 강조 되었다. 즉 "성서는 여러 증언 중의 한 증언이 아니라 둘도 없는 유일의 증언이다".

첫번의 초안은 위에 말한 수정과 다른 많은 수정으로 인하여 이단이라는 비난을 더 이상 받을수 없는 신앙고백인 것이다. "성서적 신앙고백을 위하여 연합된 장로교 교회들"이라는 아주 보수적 단체가 본래 이 새로운 신앙 고백을 반대 했던 것이다. 수정된 모든 점을 연구한 다음에 그들이 요구했던 모든 중요한 수정이 통과 되었기 때문에 더 이상 반대하지 아니하고 수정된 1967 년도 신앙고백을 받아 드릴수 있다고 공식적인 발표를 했다.

이것이 완전한 신앙고백이 아니라는것을 연합장로교회가 먼저 시인할 것이다. 사람에게 의하여 만들어진 것이기에 틀릴수도 있다. 성서만은 "유일하고 권위있는 법칙" 이다. 그러나 이 신앙고백은 장점도 있다. 즉 성서적이다. 웨스트민스터 신앙고백은 신학적인 반면에 이 신앙고백은 성서적이다. 그리고 쉽게 이해 되는 것이다. 그 내용은 변함없는 복음인 동시에 그 표현은 현대적이기 때문이다. 그리고 이 신앙고백은 실제적이다. 그러므로 하나님의 말씀의 빛이 오늘날의 문제위에 비치는 것이다.